



# Movement to Music AS EXERCISE



## GUEST CORNER

LIZE  
LUBBE

Our bodies have a unique tempo or rhythm; from our heartbeat that pulsates through our body to each breath we inhale and exhale. It is natural that our bodies react positively to external rhythms. Music and dance have been part of our growing up. As a child, our moms swayed us to sleep humming a lullaby, we clapped our hands to music, and stomped our feet to the beat of music. As adults when we listen to music, our bodies tune into the rhythm and it is difficult not to bob our head, tap our fingers or feet. Our body movement has health benefits. As Sia's 1987 song "Move your body" proclaimed "your body is poetry, move your body".

### SCIENCE BEHIND RHYTHM AND MOVEMENT

Scientific research\* has shown the clinical neuroscience benefits of music as a tool for rehabilitation. Our brains have a pathway to the auditory cortex that cue us to move. Our brain interprets the music rhythm and mentally stimulates the body's motion.\*\* To put the body in motion requires a sequencing of actions: the idea of motion (formed in the brain), plan the move (brain sends the message through the neurons to the muscles), execute (set the muscles and joints in motion), and adapt or do corrections.

### USING MUSIC TO HELP AND INCREASE ACTIVE MOVEMENT

Cadence in music is the rhythmic flow and tempo that can assist you to improve your walking: rhythmic clapping (or even better by using a metronome App) can assist you in taking equal longer strides, heel toe push-off that improves your gait speed, symmetry in walking and balance that is essential in normal walking. To tune into the beat of the music can assist you to walk better and improve your natural movement. It helps with chronological sequence in daily tasks, balance, and coordination.

The physical benefits of movement to music

Fun movement on the beat of music holds several health benefits:

- Stimulates circulation.
- Helps to improve muscle tone and strength.
- Helps to improve joint range of motion.

- Improves coordination and balance.
- Improves flexibility in the whole body.
- Strengthens the mind-muscle connection to build neuropathways.
- Stimulates the brain and memory learning abilities.
- Reduces stress and lifts your emotional mood.
- Improves your body spatial awareness and confidence and makes you smile!

As a PT, I encourage you to actively move to the beat of music to your own rhythm. Clap your hands to music, move your shoulders and arms, and tap your feet. With each movement your muscles contract and release and this strengthens the neural pathway connections to movement.

### BRING THE FUN AND SILLY BACK INTO YOUR MOVEMENT

Movement to music is a great way to stay active, have fun, be silly and create your own dance choreography (remember "dance like nobody's watching")! Just listen to the rhythm and start moving at your own pace. Sitting down or holding onto the kitchen counter moving different parts of your body and as you get more balanced and stable put a sequence of movements together.

### SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVING YOUR MOVEMENT TO MUSIC

Turn up the volume to your favorite music and get ready to have fun and move your body to the beat. Never hold your breath and breathe deep in and out as you move either seated or standing.

#### Seated:

- The following seated exercises will improve your pelvic stability and flexibility that in turn will help you with your daily activities. Sit up tall and straight, do not lean against the back of the chair.
- Alternate tapping one foot, heel-toes, lifting your knee up towards your chest to clear your foot from the ground. Repeat 10 times with each ankle.
  - Twist your torso and shoulders from side-to-side in a jive twisting movement, allow your pelvis and hips to rock and move with your upper body.
  - Put the foot-leg movement together with your shoulder-torso movement.
  - To progress from sitting stationary, sit on a pillow or stability cushion.

#### Standing:

Stand close to a kitchen counter or sturdy table. Keep your body tall and



elongated and knees slightly bent.

- Step side to side in a bouncy step, tap the other foot next to your stepping leg, keep in tune to the rhythm and clear your feet off the ground.
- Step sideways in a cha-cha step: side-step to the left with your left foot, step backwards with your right foot, behind your left foot and weight shift. Then side-step to the right with your right foot and bring your left foot backwards behind your right foot and weight shift. Keep the rhythm and tempo. As you feel more confident and balanced, add your upper body and arms, keep your opposite elbow

and arm always in front of the leg that is in front.

*If you have any difficulty moving with ease or experience pain, please contact your physician or physical therapist for help.*

\* Janzen, Koshimori, Richard & Thaut - *Rhythm and Music-Based Interventions in Motor Rehabilitation: Current Evidence and Future Perspectives*, National Library of Medicine (Jan. 2022)

\*\* Fowler - *The Motor Theory of Perception Music*, Handbook of Brain Theory and Neural Networks (Arbid Ed., 1996)

*Lize Lubbe is the owner of Lize Lubbe Physical Therapy with its main practice located at 892 Route 35 in Cross River and a PT Studio in the premises of Apex Fitness (where her team focus on the rehabilitation of sports-related injuries). Learn more by calling 914-875-9430, emailing contact@lizelubbept.com or visiting www.lizelubbept.com.*



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